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INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMITMENTS AND POLICIES AGREED UPON IN THE DECLARATION ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION, IN PARTICULAR THE REVITALIZATION OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Regional economic integration among developing countries

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 46/145 of 17 December 1991, the General Assembly pointed to the substantive importance of integration among developing countries for the strengthening of growth and socio-economic development; it decided that activities promoting economic integration among developing countries should be given special attention in the revision of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 and recommended that such activities be included as separate subprogrammes, where appropriate, in the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 taking into account the need for coordination and the avoidance of duplication; it requested the regional commissions to contribute together with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to the identification, preparation and implementation of specific projects to facilitate economic integration and to submit them to bilateral donors, regional development banks and financial institutions for their consideration; and it requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its forty-eighth session on the progress in the implementation of the resolution.

II. REGIONAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION IN THE MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1992-1997

2. The medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, as revised in 1992, 1/ contains detailed references to measures envisaged by UNCTAD, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) as follows:

(a) UNCTAD: Subprogramme 8 2/ entitled "Enlarged economic spaces, regional integration processes and systemic issues of international trade" of programme 13 aims at: (i) helping ensure that economic integration arrangements impart dynamism to global trade and growth and enhance the trade and development possibilities of all countries, particularly developing countries, and that they serve to strengthen the multilateral trading systems; (ii) contributing to the achievement of an equitably secure, non-discriminatory and predictable international trading system; and (iii) contributing to the promotion of regional and subregional economic integration, particularly among developing countries, as a complementary means of strengthening the trade liberalization process in order to facilitate, in a timely way, the smooth and equitable integration of all countries in the international trading system;

(b) ECLAC: Subprogramme 14 3/ entitled "Regional integration and cooperation" of programme 33 has the following objectives: (i) to promote the full utilization of the multilateral and bilateral cooperation mechanisms contained in regional and subregional integration and cooperation schemes with a view to expanding intra-regional trade; (ii) to support Member States in the formation of united regional positions in the various forums for multilateral negotiations in which they participate; (iii) to advise the countries of the region on financial integration, particularly with a view to the development of institutions to facilitate the allocation of investment resources in the region; and (iv) to promote the exchange of experience in various areas of common interest, especially economic and social planning, science and technology,

on the following activities throughout Somalia: targeted free distribution, vulnerable group feeding, food-for-work, institutional feeding (hospitals and prisons), assistance to the education sector, resettlement/repatriation and market sales schemes.

54. In the case of food-for-work, food aid has acted as an incentive to encourage people to undertake, for example, sanitation and water works schemes. In the education sector, food, as a wage substitute, has encouraged the return of teachers to the school and increased the attendance of the children. As urban unemployment is an important issue that needs to be addressed, WFP and CONCERN have initiated a nutrition programme that provides commodities to newly emerging bakeries to make buns for the school programme. WFP and UNICEF are also developing other employment schemes. Programmes to resettle the internally displaced, as well as to assist the return of Somali refugees from neighbouring countries, constitute the largest part of the WFP programme in terms of beneficiaries and are considered a high priority. Finally, the WFP/CARE market sales programme has expanded into three other areas, in addition to Mogadishu. The programme has not only increased its market capacity, but the increase in funds will enable a more labour-intensive scheme to be supported.

55. WFP has taken the lead in food-aid coordination by chairing a committee of relevant United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, which meets regularly, sharing information on food aid programmes and deliveries. The committee has also developed a strategy that ensures that crop and food supply assessments are carried out on a regular basis by the committee members, in order to ensure that up-to-date information is always available for consultation and quick intervention if necessary.

56. WFP has completed two assessments, one on truck rehabilitation and the second on the management of Mogadishu port. Both projects will be operational during the second half of 1993, as all of the necessary preparatory work has been completed and the funding is available.

C. United Nations Development Programme

57. The United Nations Development Programme, during the Coordination Meeting for Humanitarian Assistance for Somalia, held at Addis Ababa in December 1992, made a strong commitment to support development and initiated a number of projects that are now operational.

58. A rehabilitation programme strategy was formulated in December 1992 by a UNDP/Office of Project Services mission assessing needs initially in the northern region, and UNDP resources in the order of US$ 20 million were programmed in close consultation with UNOSOM and other partners, including national and international non-governmental organizations. The Somalia Rehabilitation Programme (SOM/92/001) serves as a mechanism to establish a network of, initially, seven project implementation offices, each covering two to three districts, operated by a small expatriate team supported by national experts. Four project implementation offices are now in the process of being established, and six international project staff have taken up their assignment in northern Somalia.

59. The Programme operates through local-level community groups and local authorities. Specific mechanisms to identify, select and approve sub-projects were developed at the outset of the project and, as the Programme evolves, are periodically reviewed.

60. A total of 19 sub-projects are operational in the northern region and one in the south. Sub-projects include school rehabilitation, bridge repair, re-establishing of market facilities, including collection of user fees, training of former militia in employable skills and negotiating agreements with local business groups to provide employment, repair of small irrigation facilities and provision of agricultural implements. Infrastructure repair activities include establishing technical and management capacities to ensure that the facilities are properly maintained. At present, 32 additional sub-projects have been identified. It is expected that the expansion of project activities will soon cover areas in the central and southern region.

61. One major subcontract with Save the Children, USA, co-financed by USAID, to rehabilitate large-scale irrigation systems and social infrastructure in the Lower Shebelle region, has demonstrated that development inputs in a region initially dominated by conflict can become productive again.

62. In order to support the political and peacemaking process, a project was approved to prepare a medium-term reconstruction and rehabilitation plan (SOM/93/001) for Somalia. In May 1993, a first phase technical planning team produced a framework for the preparation and coordination of the medium-term plan and terms of reference for the technical inputs. Subsequently, in consultation with donors and multilateral organizations, UNOSOM decided that it would take the responsibility for the overall coordination of the plan preparation and delegated the responsibility to the World Bank, in close coordination with UNDP, donors, other multilateral organizations and non-governmental organizations.

63. UNDP is funding an International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)-executed project (SOM/93/002) to restore air traffic control at Mogadishu International Airport, to be expanded to other airports at a later stage.

64. A UNDP project executed by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (SOM/93/003) aims to build the management capacities of the Mogadishu Port Authority and other ports in Somalia. A key component of these projects is to support the re-establishment of installations, which will help to generate much-needed revenue in the near future. This project is being undertaken in close coordination with UNOSOM and WFP.

65. UNDP, with financial and material support from the Government of the United States of America, continues to operate the Mogadishu water supply system. This project (SOM/90/023) played a key role during the crisis in 1992 in preventing large-scale epidemics caused by contaminated water from shallow wells. A new phase, with activities proposed to build a water authority as the lead institution responsible for supplying town water, is under consideration. Under the same project, a sanitation programme is being implemented, which employs up to 1,000 Somalis, mostly women, through subcontracts with local non-governmental organizations.

commissions, to avoid duplication and wastage of resources and rationalize fund raising for economic integration.

V. ACTIVITIES FOR THE PROMOTION OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

A. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

11. The Cartagena Commitment on a new partnership for development (TD/364) adopted at the eighth session of UNCTAD, held in February 1992, recognized the need for revitalizing and strengthening the framework for economic cooperation among developing countries (ECDC). The Conference viewed such collaborative working framework as an important component of efforts to promote economic growth in developing countries and as a means of securing the integration of developing countries into the world economy. Against this background and in pursuance of the institutional parts of the Cartagena Commitment, the Trade and Development Board, at the second part of its thirty-eighth session, held from 21 April to 7 May 1992, adopted the terms of reference of the new Standing Committee on Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries (see A/47/15, vol. I, decision 398 (XXXVIII)).

12. The Standing Committee, guided also by paragraphs 3 and 8 of its terms of reference, discussed, inter alia, two sets of support activities to complement efforts of developing countries in this respect. One set of activities related to the financial and other support by the international community in general to help meet the needs and requirements of the actions in the field of ECDC, and the other set of activities related to operational activities to be undertaken by UNCTAD in support of ECDC.

13. At its first session (11-15 January 1993), the Standing Committee established its work programme which, inter alia, made provisions for regular consultations for a pragmatic policy dialogue among the donor community, subregional, regional and interregional groupings, as well as other participants in ECDC programmes and projects with a view, in particular, to mobilizing support for designing and implementing regional initiatives, interregional activities and networking of integration and cooperation schemes. In order to establish agreed arrangements for the conduct of the regular consultations, the Committee decided that:

(a) An intergovernmental group of experts to hold consultations with interregional, regional and subregional groupings should be organized prior to the second session of the Standing Committee (February 1994), with a view to collecting relevant information from the donor community and preparing prospects for improvement of assistance programmes. Participants in ECDC programmes and projects were invited to present their developmental objectives and external assistance requirements to this intergovernmental meeting;

(b) The second session of the Committee should review the report of the intergovernmental consultations, with a view to identifying specific programmes, projects and measures for international support.

14. To launch the donor-recipient regular consultations and to make it "demand driven", the UNCTAD secretariat has sent questionnaires to all relevant participants in ECDC programmes and projects to ascertain their developmental objectives and external assistance requirements, and also to the potential donors and their institutions so as to report on their existing economic assistance programmes favouring the regional economic cooperation and integration process of the developing countries. Based on that information, the UNCTAD secretariat is planning to prepare a policy-oriented background paper which will present preliminary suggestions for possible improvements in scope and features of the economic assistance programmes of the donor community. The UNCTAD secretariat considers that the establishment of such a mechanism is both an important political breakthrough, as well as a reaffirmation of General Assembly resolution 45/203 of 21 December 1990, in which the Assembly expressed its support for the efforts of the UNCTAD secretariat as the principal organization in the United Nations system dealing with ECDC.

15. Technical cooperation activities carried out by the UNCTAD secretariat in recent years for ECDC encompass assistance to economic cooperation groupings, cooperation on financial and monetary matters and enterprise cooperation initiatives. A number of other related activities, for example in the area of transport and finance which also promote ECDC, can be found in the document entitled "Review of the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD" (TD/B/WP/76).

16. In Asia, the UNCTAD secretariat is associated with a project to assist member States of the Bangkok Agreement. UNCTAD developed and provided trade data covering products of export interest to the prospective member States and of import interest to member States of the Agreement. In addition, in response to the request of participating countries of the Bangkok Agreement, UNCTAD, in cooperation with ESCAP and UNDP, has undertaken the necessary technical studies for the establishment of a regional investment information and promotion service for Asia and the Pacific.

17. The UNCTAD secretariat also provided assistance to the Asian Clearing Union (ACU). A number of technical studies were prepared on the benefits and costs to individual ESCAP member States of joining ACU. For instance, two studies related to the cost and benefits of China and the Philippines joining ACU are in progress currently. These formed the basis for consultations among the ACU and ESCAP members during a meeting organized jointly by the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran, ESCAP and UNCTAD.

18. For the members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), UNCTAD supported the meeting of the national coordinators on ASEAN banking and financial policies, held in Thailand. The meeting drew up a set of concrete policy recommendations to the ASEAN Standing Committee, which met in December 1991. In addition, the UNCTAD secretariat assisted the ASEAN secretariat in preparing and organizing a seminar on ASEAN subregional cooperation with particular reference to the ASEAN scheme for an ASEAN free trade area, held in June 1993.

19. The United Nations/Chitose Forum on South-South Cooperation with particular reference to Asia and the Pacific, organized jointly by UNCTAD and the United Nations University (UNU), met from 11 to 15 May 1992 in Chitose City, Hokkaido,

Japan. On the agenda were the various issues related to South-South cooperation, particularly in Asia and the Pacific. The Forum examined the factors favouring the dynamic performance of the developing economies in the Asian and Pacific region in the 1980s, at a time when most economies in the rest of the developing world were stagnating. The Forum also discussed the important role of the donor countries as well as that of financial institutions, including the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank, in promoting regional economic Cooperation.

20. The UNCTAD secretariat assisted, in July-August 1992, the Tumen River Area Development Programme, which aims at improving economic cooperation between China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mongolia, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation by making assessments of prospects in the area of transport and mineral resources.

21. In the Arab countries, in cooperation with the International Trade Centre (ITC) and UNDP, UNCTAD is assisting the Arab Trade Financing Programme (ATFP) through the drafting of a manual on the operational procedures of loans and credits extended by ATFP to its national agencies. Support was also provided to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), in particular as regards the harmonization of tariffs and related measures.

22. In Africa, the UNCTAD secretariat provided assistance to ECOWAS in the areas of coastal shipping, common external tariff and monetary and financial cooperation. With regard to coastal shipping, on the basis of a study undertaken earlier by UNCTAD, the practical aspects of the implementation of its recommendations were explored with the ECOWAS secretariat, and a promotional meeting of Governments, subregional organizations and potential investors was held in April 1992. As regards the common external tariff, meetings of customs administrations, government officials and economic operators of member countries were organized in 1991 with a view to examining the basic aspects of a common external tariff for ECOWAS. In respect to monetary and financial cooperation, UNCTAD prepared terms of reference and a work programme relating to the establishment of a single monetary zone. Support is being provided to the group of experts of central banks in charge of the implementation of a programme for the eventual full convertibility of ECOWAS currencies. Substantive technical support to the West African Clearing House came to an end in February 1993, after the preparation of a compendium containing the studies prepared for the workshop with the conclusions and recommendations reached at the meetings.

23. In the case of ECCAS, UNCTAD continued to provide assistance relating to the rules of origin and harmonization of trade and customs documents, regulations and legislation. A study on the ECCAS compensation fund for loss of budgetary resources consequent to the implementation of the trade liberalization programme was undertaken in 1992. With regard to the Common External Tariff (CET), the study undertaken for ECOWAS on the basic aspects of a CET is being adapted for ECCAS.

24. In southern Africa, assistance was given to Lesotho and Swaziland under a subregional project, from which Botswana and Namibia also benefitted, in preparing for negotiations with the Republic of South Africa regarding the Southern African Customs Union Agreement (SACU). This assistance involved the

preparation of a number of technical studies and memoranda on various aspects of the SACU Agreement as well as negotiating briefs for use of negotiators.

25. The Preferential Trade Area (PTA) for Eastern and Southern African States continued to be a major beneficiary of UNCTAD assistance in various areas of the PTA's economic cooperation and trade liberalization programmes. The UNCTAD secretariat is currently undertaking a major project with the PTA secretariat on customs administration in the PTA markets. Other activities include technical work for payments and monetary harmonization, and trade facilitation measures.

26. In the area of transport, particularly rail transport, the UNCTAD secretariat is helping to promote regional integration by the introduction of new technology-based management systems aimed at improving transport efficiency. A cargo tracking system is being installed on several African railways in West, Central and Eastern Africa. The system (Advance Cargo Information System) plays an important role in the development of trade relations and above all in reinforcing subregional integration because it enables all operators who belong to the system to communicate, through modes and interfaces and over borders, the vital information that is required for them to improve transport efficiency; thus the costs of the carriage of goods are reduced. Further, the UNCTAD secretariat is helping to facilitate the trade of African land-locked countries through improved transit traffic facilities and streamlined documentation and thereby deepen subregional integration.

27. Most of the activities in the enterprise sector have been undertaken in the framework of technical assistance projects by UNDP. This was the case for the meetings of trading enterprises from Africa and Latin America, which led to the establishment of the Association of African Trading Enterprises, the buyers and sellers meeting organized in Argentina for African entrepreneurs, the Savana meeting of enterprises from Africa, Asia and Latin America and Europe, the meeting of Trading enterprises of Asian and Latin America countries of the Pacific rim (Santiago, November 1992) and the activities for the establishment of a regional investment information and promotion service for Asia and the Pacific.

28. Under a separate project, UNCTAD provided assistance to the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of Countries (ACP) by preparing a draft programme of work for the establishment of joint enterprises by investors of ACP countries.

29. Under the project started in 1991 on financial and other support to regional and subregional integration groupings, the UNCTAD secretariat has reviewed current international economic assistance programmes for regional groupings and how they are utilized in order (a) to identify the areas where support from the donor community is needed and (b) to prepare the basis for a new approach to economic cooperation between the regional groupings, on the one hand, and the donor community, on the other. Based on the information so obtained, suggestions will be made to improve the modalities and structures of economic assistance for regional and subregional economic cooperation and integration groupings.

30. Activities have been initiated by UNCTAD to enhance exchange of experiences among subregional economic integration groupings. The experience of the ASEAN subregion, in particular its "Dialogue Partners" relationship with donor

developed countries, has been selected as offering useful guidance in facilitating such subregional cooperation.

31. One area that is being explored by UNCTAD is the potential for regional and subregional economic cooperation of the Central Asian Republics with the neighbouring Asian economies. Possible areas for cooperation could be (a) linkages with the private sector institutions and business of the region, (b) the development of intra-trade, (c) improvement of the investment climate, particularly intraregional public/private foreign investment, (d) broadening and streamlining of the border trade, (e) provision of credits and financial support for trade, (f) improving and rationalizing the institutional and legal structure to foster growth of the private sector in trade, production and services in collaboration with the subregional and regional capacities, (g) potential for joint ventures, and (h) macroeconomic policies in favour of subregional/regional economic cooperation.

32. In view of the diversity of technological development and capabilities of the developing countries, the pooling of resources through varied forms of cooperation becomes even more of a strategic necessity. Among areas which may be explored to this end, the following could be considered: (a) facilitating collaborative ventures among enterprises relating to technology through, for example, setting up common corporate legal requirements; (b) devising more flexible mechanisms for implementing cooperation regarding, for example, sectors and geographical locations; (c) systematically exploring and improving information flows concerning possibilities for technology and business ventures cross-regionally; (d) designing intercountry schemes for improving creativity and innovation, particularly through diverse forms of incentives and motivation; and (e) increased and improved programmes providing opportunities for the training and retraining of personnel, particularly managers and technology innovators, and including the provision of course materials, among developing countries and in the developed countries' enterprises.

33. The UNCTAD secretariat has started to examine the ways in which the international community can work out blue prints of programmes for a comprehensive rehabilitation of Cambodia as a matter of urgency with a view to launching a number of actions required. If these programmes are implemented, it would necessitate the support of the international community through multilateral or bilateral measures.

B. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

34. The medium-term workplan of the Commission for the period 1992-1997 was modified according to the provisions of Assembly resolution 46/145. Specifically, for the biennium 1994-1995, the creation of a new subprogramme 14 "Regional integration and cooperation" was approved, which contains the following three thematic areas:

14.1 Analysis and support of the regional integration and cooperation processes

14.2 Cooperation and assistance in specific fields to countries of the region

14.3 Relations of Latin America and the Caribbean with other developing regions

35. Within the context of those subprogrammes, the following activities are foreseen for the next two years:

1994

Non-recurrent publications

A study on the current status of integration efforts in Latin America and the Caribbean and the medium-term outlook in this regard. This document will include proposals for resolving the chief problems that are found to exist. (14.1)

A study on cooperation and integration in key production sectors, particularly as regards opportunities for cross-complementarity and free access to expanded markets. (14.2)

1995

Official records and records of meetings and conferences

Meeting of experts to analyse the situation and outlook of regional integration and cooperation (14.1)

Non-recurrent publications

An examination of the possibilities of aligning the various integration schemes and subgroupings existing in the region as well as the problems in this respect. The study will also propose approaches for arriving at agreements of an increasingly multilateral nature. (14.1)

A study on possible areas and modalities of cooperation in the intra-regional production and marketing of services among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. (14.2)

A study on economic cooperation between the developing countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and those of Africa and Asia, to include proposals for strengthening the economic links among these regions. (14.3)

C. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

36. ESCAP attaches high priority to economic integration among developing countries in the Asia and Pacific region. Accordingly, the Commission at its forty-eighth session set up a subsidiary legislative body known as the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation to provide new impetus to the process of integration. The Committee has been enjoined by the Commission to perform, inter alia, the following functions:

(a) To serve as a mobilizer of ideas, a forum for policy-oriented discussion and a catalyst for action to promote regional economic cooperation;

(b) To initiate policy-oriented studies on regional economic cooperation;

(c) To identify potential areas for regional economic cooperation, recommend appropriate policy options and assist regional members and associate members of the Commission in implementing measures to achieve such cooperation by encouraging, facilitating and sponsoring consultations through the establishment of working groups, including expert and technical groups and other appropriate arrangements;

(d) To devise ways and means of establishing dialogue with development agencies and financial institutions, private sector organizations, non-governmental organizations, and donor countries within and outside the region in its initiatives and activities to promote regional economic cooperation;

(e) To carry out such other activities as the Commission may direct from time to time in matters relating to regional economic cooperation.

37. With a view to operationalizing the functions of the Committee, ESCAP formulated a subprogramme on regional economic cooperation (programme 31, subprogramme 1) embodying activities for the promotion of economic integration. The objectives of the subprogramme are, inter alia:

(a) To analyse emerging trends towards greater complementarity and interdependence among countries in the region with a view to evolving an effective implementation of policies that would take advantage of growing opportunities for mutually beneficial regional economic cooperation;

(b) To minimize problems and to take advantage of opportunities that growing interdependence might provide;

(c) To manage the smooth transition of the countries that are undergoing process of transition to market economy in the region and facilitate their eventual integration in multilateral trade systems and in the regional division of labour;

(d) To expand interregional trade;

(e) To mobilize resources for trade related investments with particular emphasis on improvement of accessibility to export finance for small and medium-scale exporters in the developing countries;

(f) To integrate industrial activities at the regional and global levels.

38. Many projects have been conceived and will be implemented during 1994-1995 biennium to fulfil the medium-term objectives of the subprogramme on regional economic cooperation. A summary picture of these activities is given below.

39. Regional economic integration among developing countries can be promoted through a variety of activities - formal institutional arrangements for trade,

investment, technology transfer, transport and communications as well as exchange of information and experiences and formal or informal policy coordination in various development issues. Accordingly, ESCAP has addressed the subject of regional economic integration in a wide range of fields.

40. At the macroeconomic level, the activities are primarily in the form of exchange of information and experiences. The main modality is publication of the Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific, the 1992 issue of which also dealt with regional cooperation in trade and investment; the Economic Bulletin for Asia and the Pacific, which publishes articles on development experience in the region, and Development Papers, which are addressed to some specific development themes. While work in the recent past has investigated subjects such as government expenditure, social costs of economic restructuring, ongoing tasks include tax reform and liberalization of the financial sector. As regards 1994-1995 biennium, the workplan includes activities relating to modelling, subregional interlinked macro-economic systems, privatization, and investment policies. Specific project proposals on these topics are under preparation for extrabudgetary financing.

41. Considerable work has also been done in the industry and technology sectors. The Commission is implementing the Seoul Plan of Action for Promoting Industrial Restructuring in Asia and the Pacific, under which several activities aimed at promoting regional cooperation in the areas of industrial development and restructuring and in technological development and transfer have been initiated. ESCAP, in compliance of its resolution 49/3, is also implementing the provisions of the Teheran Declaration on Strengthening Regional Cooperation for Technology-led Industrialization in Asia and the Pacific, which seeks to promote a greater understanding in the region of the linkages within industry and the role of the private sector. Other areas relating to greater regional interaction that have also been addressed in the work of ESCAP secretariat include biotechnology, consultancy services, integration of the production process across countries, standardization, metrology and quality control, technology transfer, and agriculture machinery.

42. In the field of international trade, the secretariat is implementing an action programme for regional economic cooperation in trade and investment. Under the terms of the action programme, particular emphasis has been accorded to the study and analysis of regional and subregional trade flows, strengthening of the regional trade information, networking of trade-related research institutions, review of sectoral foreign direct investment inflows and policies, establishment of a regional investment information and promotion services, regional commodity problems, environmental issues related to trade and investment, and inter-subregional cooperation. The action programme also addresses the role of regional cooperation in stimulating the development of small and medium export-oriented enterprises and the integration of the central Asian republics into the region. Since trade and investment is the core of all integration initiatives, activities of the secretariat also encompass organization of trade fairs, publication and dissemination of traders' manuals, and issues relating to agricultural commodities of importance in the region's trade. The secretariat is, moreover, pursuing activities related to enhancement of regional cooperation in tourism, and in support of harmonization of foreign direct investment policies within subregions.

43. In the field of transport and communications, ESCAP's work is focused on the modernization and upgrading of the region's transport and communications infrastructure under the Regional Action Programme for Phase II (1992-1996) of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific. Activities are being pursued for the development of land transport linkages and facilitation measures under the Integrated Project on Asian Land Transport Infrastructure Development comprising the Asian Highway, the trans-Asian Railway and facilitation of land transport projects. In that regard, special attention is being paid to the needs and requirements of the new members of ESCAP from Central Asia. ESCAP is also making efforts to strengthen regional cooperation in the development of waterborne transport. Various ideas have been promoted for fostering regional integration, including the development of railway networks linking the southern ports in the Persian Gulf to the northern boundary of the Islamic Republic of Iran with Turkmenistan as well as railway connections linking the north-eastern railways of the region. A study is also expected to be undertaken in the near future to assist the Central Asian States of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to determine the most appropriate corridors to a seaport.

44. In addition, the subprogramme on environment and sustainable development has identified specific activities that would enhance regional cooperation in the minerals sector, and these relate to the areas of mineral economies, mining legislation and investment promotion in the mining sector. Under this subprogramme, a number of initiatives are being taken by ESCAP towards implementation of the Regional Strategy on Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development and of Agenda 21 at the regional level. ESCAP is pursuing efforts to strengthen regional cooperation in such areas as transboundary environmental problems, desertification, protection of marine ecosystems and water resources as well as in creation of environmental awareness. The secretariat will also be actively involved in implementation of the recommendations of the Ministerial Meeting on Space Applications for Development, to be hosted by the Government of China in 1994, with a view to strengthening regional cooperation in the utilization of advanced technologies for development. Efforts are being made for the development of regional cooperative responses through, for example, the proposed establishment of the North-East Asian regional environment programme and initiatives taken to promote intercountry networks such as the regional network on research and training on desertification control in Asia and the Pacific, the regional network of environment and economic policy research institutions, and the regional working group on marine environment and oceanographic study. Similarly, ESCAP's work in statistics facilitates regional economic integration through promoting the use of consistent concepts, definitions, classifications, and frameworks. In this regard, a project on assistance in the implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts (SNA), which is likely to commence in 1994, is a good example, as is the ongoing implementation of Phase VI of the International Comparison Programme (ICP), which should assist the process of economic integration by providing more realistic estimates of comparative price levels and economic size.

45. Given that regular budget resources in the United Nations system are extremely limited, vigorous mobilization of extrabudgetary support seems vital to the task in hand. With this in view, specific projects that facilitate economic integration are submitted to bilateral donors, regional development banks and financial institutions for their consideration. During the

forty-ninth session of the Commission, held at Bangkok in April 1993, it was noted that despite the substantial increase in recent years in the demand by members and associate members for technical cooperation activities owing to the enlargement of the membership of the Commission, the emergence of the disadvantaged economies in transition, the urgency of environmentally sound and sustainable development and new regional or global initiative, the level of extrabudgetary assistance received by ESCAP had decreased during the past two years, from $8.64 million in 1990 to $6.98 million in 1991 and $6.87 million in 1992. However, establishment of new joint cooperation funds between ESCAP and developing member countries of East and South-East Asia, which had experienced rapid economic growth during the past 10 years, could be to the mutual benefit of the developing members themselves in general, and for regional economic integration in particular. Alternative extrabudgetary funding mechanisms could consider a subregional programme approach, or be restricted for the benefit of a special group of countries, or even be in the form of local cost contributions and/or contributions-in-kind.

D. Economic Commission for Africa

46. ECA finds the provisions in the medium-term plan (1992-1996) of the Commission for the promotion of regional economic integration valid and adequate. The plan, therefore, does not require any revision in that regard. The biennial programme of work and priorities may, however, need to be adjusted over time as appropriate.

47. One of the main challenges of ECA is to promote economic cooperation and integration in Africa. To this end, ECA over the years has pioneered the establishment of multinational economic groupings and institutions at both the regional and subregional levels as a strategy for spearheading collective development over a wide spectrum of economic and social fields including mineral resources, science and technology, industry, trade and human resources development.

48. Worthy of mention is the emphasis laid by the Lagos Plan of Action (A/S-11/14, annex I) on the integration of African economies, the mobilization and utilization of Africa's human and material resources for this purpose and the imperative for the coordination and harmonization of socio-economic policies among existing and future economic communities, the ultimate goal being the establishment of the African Economic Community by the year 2000.

49. Within this overall strategy of subregional and regional institution building to foster socio-economic development and integration, there was an imperative need for the harmonization and coordination of activities. This was a sine qua non for a coordinated development to take place and thereby the attainment of the goal of economic cooperation and integration.

50. In each of the subregional economic areas, there are, in addition to economic groupings spread over the entire subregions, other competing smaller economic groupings with similar aims. These groupings compete for the same resources and funds from either the same national governments or international development and financial institutions for similar activities.

51. With regards to specific operational activities in the field of economic cooperation and integration in Africa, the Commission has executed or is currently implementing the following multisectoral projects funded by UNDP: (a) short-term consultancies; and (b) multisectoral assistance projects to ECCAS, ECOWAS and the Central African Customs and Economic Union (UDEAC).

1. Project on short-term consultancies

52. An immediate problem that ECA sought to address was to ensure the coordination and harmonization of programmes and activities among subregional and regional economic groupings and thereby promote the optimum utilization of what material and human resources are available.

53. In the same vein, the project sought to ensure that appropriate and effective linkages were established among national, subregional and regional development programmes and projects concerning African countries.

54. A third concern of the project was to provide advisory support at the request of Governments in some special areas such as the rational exploration of common natural resources, particularly in relation to the development of river and lake basins. In this context, the project attained the results discussed below.

(a) Design of multisectoral projects and project documents with appropriate linkages at the national, subregional and regional levels

55. During the UNDP Fourth Programming Cycle, there was a strong need to assist the main subregional economic groupings of PTA, the West African Economic Community (CEAD), ECOWAS, ECCAS, UDEAC and the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL) to come up with viable multisectoral project proposals aimed at promoting economic integration in their respective subregions. In this connection, a process of consultations was initiated between ECA and these groupings.

56. Through the project ECA was able to generate a general consensus and a clearer understanding on the multisectoral approach to the formulation of projects of the economic groupings and provide technical support in the design and preparation of multisectoral project documents relating to the following economic groupings, PTA, ECCAS, ECOWAS and UDEAC. ECA also assisted a number of river and lake basins organizations such as the Organization for the Development of the Senegal River (OMVS), Lake Chad Basin Commission, the Kagera Basin Organization as well as the Indian Ocean Commission to formulate their development projects.

(b) Coordinated programme of activities for and between selected economic groupings

57. Through the project, ECA undertook extensive consultations with economic groupings in Central Africa, namely CEPGL, UDEAC and ECCAS, and assisted them to draw up a scheme for coordinating and harmonizing their activities to avoid wasteful duplication of effort in certain key sectors.

58. Thus, ECCAS was to be responsible for coordinating activities related to the agricultural and industrial sectors, especially basic industries, and for the elaboration of a master plan of transport networks. Once the plan is drawn up, UDEAC and CEPGL in addition to ECCAS (to cover the non-UDEAC and CEPGL countries) will be charged with the responsibility for implementing the plan.

59. In the area of market integration, CEPGL and ECCAS were respectively assigned responsibility for infrastructural development and the elimination of custom barriers, with the latter taking into account of work already done by UDEAC.

60. Efforts towards the institution of similar arrangements for the West African subregion are being pursued under the aegis of the Association of West African intergovernmental organizations (IGOs).

(c) Technical assistance to Governments and proposals for the effective development of African river and lake basins

61. A number of requests for technical assistance were received from Governments and IGOs within the framework of the project. With respect to assistance to Governments, advisory missions were conducted to Guinea, Burundi and Equatorial Guinea.

62. As regards the river and lake basins, the project assisted in the preparation of a preparatory assistance project for OMVS in relation to hydroelectric development and irrigation. The project, however, was unable to be funded by UNDP.

63. Overall, the project's strongest achievement has been the promotion of an institutionalized process of consultations among African IGOs with a view to coordinating and harmonizing their programmes and activities. Through the project, a strong awareness of the imperative for harmonizing activities of the IGOs has been created.

64. In terms of proposals for the rational exploration and development of common natural resources in particular African river and lake basins, the preparatory assistance project of the OMVS in which the project assisted in drawing up, was to have served as a pilot case for the rational development and utilization of hydroelectric and irrigation potentials of Africa's river and lake basins. However, the project could not be initiated for lack of funding.

65. The project's contribution to its long-term objective of Africa's economic cooperation and integration would be evident when the multisectoral projects of the various subregional economic groupings are fully implemented and the results requiring further investment follow-up are fully realized.

2. Multisectoral projects

66. UNDP made funds available for the implementation of three multisectoral projects executed by ECA. The aim of the multisectoral approach was to enable the policy makers to have an overall view of the necessary linkages among the various sectors as well as to ensure that priority sectors were evenly covered.

social development, international trade and natural resource and environmental management in both intraregional and interregional terms;

(c) ECA: Subprogramme 2 4/ entitled "Trade, regional economic cooperation and integration" of programme 30 has the following objectives: (i) to strengthen the capacity of African intergovernmental organizations as effective instruments of self-sustaining and self-reliant development; to assist African countries and their intergovernmental organizations in the identification and implementation of integration projects; to promote South-South cooperation to enhance economic cooperation and integration in Africa; to advance proposals for the harmonization and rationalization of the integration activities of the various intergovernmental organizations; and to review and appraise periodically the integration activities planned and undertaken by intergovernmental organizations; (ii) to strengthen sectoral integration at subregional and regional levels in the fields of transport and communications, energy, industry, agriculture, trade, finance and money, human resources, science and technology; (iii) to enhance the coordination and harmonization of national policies in order to promote common policies, particularly in the fields of agriculture, industry, transport and communications, energy, natural resources, trade, money and finance, human resources, science and technology; (iv) to strengthen existing institutional machinery for cooperation and consultation with a view to increasing the exchange of information on development financing and investment; (v) to enhance Africa's trade sector through the adoption of appropriate measures, policies and strategies for the expansion of domestic, regional and external trade; (vi) to strengthen existing institutions for subregional trade cooperation by making them more operational and responsive to Africa's trade requirements and help harmonize their negotiating positions in all international conferences on trade; (vii) to promote the establishment of subregional and regional payment arrangements, clearing-houses and banking institutions, where appropriate, but in particular, work towards the establishment of the African monetary fund and the African payments union; (viii) to promote the cooperation and harmonization of rational integration of tourism resources and potential to programmes related to the development of trade and tourism; (ix) to strengthen regional cooperation in tourism, through the establishment of inter-State circuits and machineries, joint promotion of tourism and a multinational vocation training system; and (x) to assist African countries in acquiring an increased level of necessary expertise in the field of tourism;

(d) ESCAP: Subprogramme 1 5/ entitled "Regional economic cooperation" of programme 31 embodies activities for the promotion of economic integration and similar elements are also in the various sectoral subprogrammes of the Commission.

3. Although the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) has no specific subprogramme on economic integration, economic integration issues are dealt with through the Commission's involvement with such regional organizations as the League of Arab States, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the Arab Monetary Fund, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the Inter-Arab Investment Guarantee Corporation and AGFUND and through the sectoral components of programme 34 entitled "Regional cooperation for development in Western Asia".

4. The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) has not addressed resolution 46/145. The particularities of the region and progress made in regional economic

integration in the area may justify the Commission's option to focus on sectoral cooperation and trade facilitation as appropriate.

III. REGIONAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION IN THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995

5. Specific programmes on economic integration have been included in budget sections for UNCTAD, ECA and ECLAC (see A/48/6 (sects. 11A, 15A and 18), respectively).

6. ESCAP, ECE and ESCWA (ibid., sects. 16, 17 and 19, respectively) have maintained their option to reflect economic integration activities in their various subprogrammes dealing with sectoral issues and in thematic of economic Cooperation subprogrammes.

7. Although formal coordination could not take place in drafting the 1994-1995 programme budgets for UNCTAD and the regional commissions, the specific mandates and geographic distribution of these institutions have provided an appropriate framework which helps avoid duplication of programmes. The interregional thrust of UNCTAD differentiates its programmes from those of the regional commissions. UNCTAD activities in fostering regional integration are mostly in cooperation with the regional commissions and for technical inputs into regional programmes are executed by the commissions in favour of regional groupings. UNCTAD activities in Africa, for example, have been carried out in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and in the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) under ECA-executed multisectoral projects and in close collaboration with the latter. As regional commissions move towards their new role of regional coordinators of United Nations activities, this pattern is likely to prevail.

IV. JOINT UNCTAD/REGIONAL COMMISSIONS UNDERTAKINGS FOR THE IDENTIFICATION, PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SPECIFIC PROJECTS TO FACILITATE ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

8. In Africa, UNCTAD and ECA, along with United Nations specialized agencies, have jointly carried out multisectoral projects for the promotion of economic integration in West and Central Africa.

9. In Asia, UNCTAD was associated with a project to assist member States of the Bangkok Agreement for the development of intraregional trade and the establishment of a regional investment information and promotion service. This was done in close cooperation with ESCAP and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as UNCTAD cooperation with ESCAP in their assistance to the Asian Clearing Union.

10. Joint programming, identification, preparation and implementation of projects should take place between UNCTAD and each of the regional commissions. The multisectoral project experience between ECA, UNCTAD and various other specialized agencies helped achieve this in Africa with respect to two UNDP-financed projects for ECOWAS and ECCAS. This and similar mechanisms should be used henceforth to enhance coordination between UNCTAD and the regional

Gulf War, including the annual survey of economic and social developments in the ESCWA region; analytical reviews of development trends and issues in the external sector and money and finance; a comprehensive study analysing the overall and sectoral impact of the Gulf crisis and war on economic cooperation with other developing countries in the region; and a study on financial resources availability and management in Western Asia.

81. In the energy field, ESCWA actively participated in the UNDP sponsored seminar on domestic energy policies and management in the Arab countries in October 1992. The seminar adopted recommendations that aimed mainly at improving the efficiency of energy use, promoting the development of conventional, as well as renewable, energy resources, and strengthening regional cooperation. An interregional symposium on gas development and market prospects by the year 2000 and beyond was jointly sponsored and organized by ESCWA and UNDP. The Symposium adopted a set of recommendations for the development of natural gas projects and the expansion of its use and trade within the framework of regional and interregional cooperation. Moreover, the subprogramme on energy completed a report on the progress made in the implementation of the Nairobi Programme of Action in the ESCWA region. The report included, inter alia, a review and assessment of activities undertaken, a subregional and regional cooperation for the implementation of joint renewable energy projects and the expansion of ESCWA regional information network on new and renewable energy sources.

82. Several activities were initiated towards the promotion of regional cooperation in the field of water resources. ESCWA prepared a preliminary document entitled "Water and Peace in the Middle East" reflecting ESCWA's views on the ongoing Arab-Israeli peace negotiations and their implications for the region in the water sector. ESCWA participated in the Fifth Meeting of the Arab Committee for the International Hydrological Programme, in which most ESCWA countries were represented. ESCWA representative presented a paper describing ESCWA's role in the water sector in the region and emphasizing the importance of coordination and cooperation in specific areas related to water resources.

83. As a follow-up to ESCWA regional preparatory Conference to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the Commission in its resolution 180 (XVI) of 2 September 1992 called for the establishment of an Arab and international inter-agency coordinating committee on environment and development for the purpose of promoting environmentally sound and sustainable development and for implementing Agenda 21. The efforts of ESCWA to identify country-specific and regional environmental problems in order to develop appropriate policy strategies, methodologies and safeguards for promoting environmentally sound and sustainable development is reflected in preparatory work to convene in 1993 several technical workshops including one entitled "Regional Workshop on Awareness and Preparedness for Emergencies at the Local Level in the Arab World" and another entitled "Symposium on Cleaner Technology Applications in Developing Countries".

84. In the domain of food and agriculture, ESCWA continued to disseminate information through the issuance of its annual publication "Agriculture and Development in Western Asia". Action was also initiated towards the preparation of a national plan of action to combat desertification in the United Arab Emirates and the formulation of two desertification control projects in the

Republic of Yemen and Oman. Preparation for holding an ad hoc expert group meeting of rural development at the ESCWA regional level, has been going on by undertaking different studies on the subject at the national level. Two country studies, seven papers and one regional study were prepared. The meeting is to be held in Amman in October 1993. Furthermore, in emphasizing capacity-building in Western Asia, the Joint ESCWA/FAO Division held several training workshops during the reporting period. These workshops and seminars included some on training on the use of computers in agricultural policy analysis, farm management surveys, data processing and project planning, and others on agricultural marketing at the regional and international levels.

85. With respect to the industrial sector, ESCWA organized a regional seminar on "Motivation, Orientation and Training Techniques for Enhancing Industrial Entrepreneurship in the ESCWA Region", and an expert group meeting on "Interconnection Technologies for Electronics in the Arab Countries". Various studies were undertaken in the areas pertaining to strengthening the functioning of the industrial training institutions in the ESCWA region; promotion of entrepreneurship in small-scale industry; and the review and assessment of recent developments in the manufacturing sector in the ESCWA region.

86. In the field of science and technology, a workshop on the "Implications of New and Advanced Materials Technologies for Economies of the ESCWA Countries" was organized by ESCWA jointly with UNIDO's New Technology and the Arab Region Programme. The science and technology programme in ESCWA has responded to the enhanced interest in environmental affairs, and to the wide scope for applying science and technology in activities aimed at protecting the environment by making preparations for future activities directly dealing with the application of science and technology to promote the protection of the region's environment and the introduction/development of environmentally sound technologies. This is partly manifested by the series of activities on ozone-depleting substances and the utilization of space technology for monitoring desert environments.

87. The activities of the transport and communication programme aiming at strengthening regional cooperation and development in the field of transport have focused on three main issues: (i) impact of the privatization and deregulation aspects and subsidy policies in the transport sector, (ii) manpower policies and training for transport operations, and (iii) maritime transport problems. In addition to the annual issue of the ESCWA Transport Bulletin, four publications pertaining to developments in the field of transport in the ESCWA region were completed. These publications focused on the privatization and deregulation of selected transport modes, subsidies in the transport sector, pricing policies of port services and the training needs of transport authorities in Western Asia. Furthermore, ESCWA organized a seminar on modern pricing policies for ports in the ESCWA region and an Expert Group Meeting on training requirements in the transport sector.

88. Within its activity on regional cooperation, the statistics programme participated in a number of technical and policy-oriented meetings. This included participation in the Second Arab Conference on National Accounts, the Statistical Committee on the Council for Arab Economic Unity, the Statistical Standing Committee on the League of Arab States, the Board of Directors of the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics, and the Regional Seminar for Senior Statisticians in Household Surveys. At the international level,

ESCWA also participated in the interregional seminar on the revision of the United Nations System of National Accounts, the meeting of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities, and other inter-secretariat working groups and meetings held at United Nations Headquarters in New York. With regard to the dissemination of statistical information, the statistics programme published in 1992 editions of the Statistical Abstract of the ESCWA Region, the Bulletin of National Accounts and the External Trade Bulletin.

89. Under the social development and population programme, ESCWA organized the Cultural Event of Disabled Persons in the ESCWA Region, which included substantive sessions, assessment and evaluation of the World Programme of Action for Disabled Persons at the end of the decade in the ESCWA region and the formulation of a regional long-term strategy. Four technical publications on national policies for crime prevention; review of national policies of drug abuse control; the situation of marginalized youth groups in the region; and adaptation and transfer of new technologies for disabled persons in the region were published. The Commission also participated in organizing, and co-sponsoring with the Islamic Development Bank, a symposium on low-cost housing in the Arab region, which called for the intensification of efforts to exchange information and experiences and to coordinate policies and programmes with a view to alleviating the problems of housing in the region. In addition, preparatory work for undertaking two Expert Group Meetings on "Unemployment in the Arab World" and "Human Development" was initiated.

90. Under the women and development subprogramme, the commission completed five case studies on participation of women in the food and textiles industries in five member States. Also, executive summaries of nine studies on participation of women in development were issued in Arabic and English for the benefit of other United Nations bodies and funding organizations. ESCWA continued to support technical assistance activities for the development of women in the region, and has also undertaken various activities which would be used as major inputs in the regional preparatory meeting for the International Year of the Family due to be held in Amman in November 1993.

91. The technical cooperation subprogramme, in its endeavour to promote and strengthen regional cooperation, has through the regional advisory services assisted member States in strengthening national and regional institutions in the following areas: data processing, energy, environment, human resources development, industrial development, national accounts and economic statistics, development planning, science and technology, transport and communications, and water resources development.

92. During the reporting period, ESCWA intensified its cooperation and coordination of activities with other regional and international organizations and Arab institutions active in the region with a view to avoiding duplication of work and to ensure the optimum use of limited resources.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

93. In response to General Assembly resolution 46/145 on regional economic integration, UNCTAD and most of the regional commissions have included in their revised medium-term plans (1992-1997) specific programmes and/or sectoral

activities for the promotion of regional economic integration. The proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 before the General Assembly reflects those programmes and activities.

94. UNCTAD and the regional commissions have embarked on various activities for the promotion of economic cooperation and integration.

95. Effective coordination between UNCTAD and the regional commissions has taken place in a few regions in the framework of sectoral and multisectoral extrabudgetary projects. This should continue and formal mechanisms should be devised to this effect.

96. The efforts of UNCTAD and the regional commissions in preparing, formulating and implementing joint projects for the promotion of regional economic integration could help avoid duplication and mobilize the required extrabudgetary resources.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/47/6/Rev.1), vols. I and II.

2/ Ibid., vol. I, paras. 13.68-13.72.

3/ Ibid., vol. II, paras. 33.97-33.101.

4/ Ibid., paras. 30.29-30.42.

5/ Ibid., paras. 31.15-31.23.